

## Medicines Optimisation Campaign Medicine Reviews

### Communications Toolkit

September 2024

#### Introduction

The ICB's Medicines Optimisation Team are launching a behaviour change campaign across North East and North Cumbria ICB. This public-facing campaign complements major ongoing areas of clinical work, where prescribing has an impact on health and outcomes:

- **Inappropriate polypharmacy (Medicine Reviews, under the 'Are the Medicines Working' campaign theme)**

"Are your medicines working for you?" is an initiative designed to support more open conversations between patients and healthcare professionals about whether or not long-term medicines should continue to be prescribed. The Medicine Reviews campaign is aimed at the public and is centred around educating patients on the purpose and value of medicine reviews and encouraging self-reflection around their current medication.

The campaign is supplemented by existing resources aimed at healthcare professionals that support them to have successful conversations with their patients about deprescribing and alternative treatments.

#### About the toolkit

This toolkit provides a brief overview of the campaign. It includes key messages, newsletter items, a one-page staff explainer, links to patient-facing materials and social media posts for you to customise and use in your comms and engagement work.

Page numbers for the individual sections can be found below:

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## **Promotional Material**

A range of promotional materials, such as posters, digital display screens, and social media graphics, are available to download from the Campaign Hub website ([nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk](https://nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk)).

**For further information please contact [victoriacasey@nhs.net](mailto:victoriacasey@nhs.net)**

## Key messages

**Medicine reviews (Are the Medicines Working) - Raising awareness of medicine reviews, opening conversations on long-term medication and reducing inappropriate polypharmacy.**

**Website - [areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk](http://areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk)**

- Patients taking multiple medicines (polypharmacy) is an ongoing challenge across the whole NHS. When patients are prescribed medicines which are no longer appropriate, this contributes to poorer health outcomes. However, it can be difficult to identify which medicines are (or are not) appropriate. The campaign is designed to support more open conversations between patients and healthcare professionals about whether or not long-term medicines should continue to be prescribed.
- Problematic polypharmacy adds a cost to the healthcare system and diminishes quality care for the patient – and most of this is entirely preventable.
- This campaign starts by asking patients: **How are your medicines making you feel?** It provides context that over time our bodies change, and therefore prescribed medication may need to change to. The campaign aims to educate patients on the purpose and value of medicine reviews, and to encourage patients to self-reflect on how their medication is making them feel. The call to action is to book a medicine review.
- As part of the toolkit for GP practices to support the campaign, we've developed symptom trackers. These can be used in a number of different ways; for example, sending out in advance for medication review to get the patient to track their symptoms, or side effects from medication.

## General public

### What can I do about it?

As a patient, you can ask yourself the following to see if you would need to book a review with your healthcare professional:

1. Do you think your medicines are helping your health, or stopping it from getting worse? If so, in what way are they working?
2. When was the last time you didn't take at least one of your medicines? Why was this?
3. Have you experienced any unwanted side effects from your medication? If so, what have you noticed?

You can book a medicine review with your healthcare professional at any time.

## Suggested bulletin/newsletter copy

### Medicine Reviews (Are the Medicines Working)

Patients taking multiple medicines (polypharmacy) is an ongoing challenge across the whole NHS. The National Prescribing review found that **10% of medicines prescribed in primary care are 'pointless'** – i.e. unnecessary, lack appropriate clinical indication or are simply wasted.

### About the campaign

When patients are prescribed medicines which are no longer appropriate, this contributes to poorer health outcomes. However, it can be difficult to identify which medicines are (or are not) appropriate. This campaign aims to change that by asking patients: **How are your medicines making you feel?** We then want to educate patients about the purpose and value of medicine reviews, and encourage patients to book a review if they notice any changes that may indicate a medication isn't right for them.

### How can you support the campaign?

It is difficult to determine if medicines are working or not without an open conversation with the patient. This campaign aims to encourage patients to be proactive in booking a medicine review, and support those conversations to help identify medicines which do not seem to be working for the patient.

There's a range of campaign resources available to download at:

[nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk](http://nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk)

- Digital screen adverts
- A4 posters
- Social media graphics
- Website banners

## One-page explainer for staff

**The North East and North Cumbria ICB Medicines Optimisation Team are rolling out a impactful behaviour-change campaign across the region.**

The campaign aligns with ongoing clinical work, emphasising the critical role of prescribing in healthcare outcomes.

### **Inappropriate polypharmacy - Medicine Reviews (Are the Medicines Working)**

- Raises awareness of the purpose and value of medicine reviews.
- Encourages patients to self-reflect on their own medication and book a medicine review if they notice any changes that may indicate a medication isn't right for them.
- Promotes open conversations between patients and healthcare professionals about long-term medication.

### **Why are they being launched?**

This public-facing campaign has been developed to complement major ongoing areas of clinical work, where prescribing has an impact on health and outcomes.

### **How can we help?**

There are four main areas where you can help with the roll out of the campaign and key messages:

**Conversations:** Engage in meaningful discussions with patients about the campaign topics.

**Resources:** Utilise campaign materials to support your conversations and educate patients.

**Promotion:** Encourage patients to visit campaign websites for additional information.

**Awareness:** Raise awareness of these campaigns within your practice and among colleagues.

Resources can be found on the campaign hub: [nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk](https://nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk)

Public facing website: [areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk](https://areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk)

## Social media posts

Below we have written some sample posts for social media channels, including Facebook and X (formally known as Twitter). Please note that these are to be accompanied by the relevant campaign social graphics which can be downloaded from the Campaign Hub website ([nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk](https://nenc-campaignhub.nhs.uk)).

### Patient facing:

#### How are your medicines making you feel?

Over time our bodies change. To make sure your medicines still work for you, they may need to change too.

A medicine review is for both you and a healthcare professional to talk about your medication together.

For more information visit [areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk](https://areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk)

#### How are your medicines making you feel?

Do you think your medicines are improving your health, or stopping your health from getting worse?

When was the last time you didn't take at least one of your medicines?

Have you experienced any unwanted side effects from your medication?

As a patient, you can book a medicine review with your healthcare professional at any time to ensure you are on the right medication for you.

For more information visit [areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk](https://areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk)

#### Have you spoken to us about your medicines within the last year?

Over time our bodies change. To make sure your medicines still work for you, they may need to change too.

A medicine review is for both you and a healthcare professional to talk about your medication together.

For more information visit [areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk](https://areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk)

#### Have you spoken to us about your medicines within the last year?

It's important that your medications are reviewed regularly, as:

- Your condition or circumstances may have changed, and the medicines you were prescribed may no longer be right for you.
- It might be better to stop taking your medication, but this will be discussed at your review.

You shouldn't stop taking your medication without support. If you have any questions or concerns about your medication please speak with your GP pharmacist or GP.

For more information visit [areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk](http://areyourmedicinesworking.co.uk)

## Patient Text Messages

Over time our bodies change. To make sure your medicines still work for you, they may need to change too. As a patient, you can book a medicine review with your healthcare professional at any time to ensure you are on the right medication for you.

Do you think your medicines are improving your health, or stopping your health from getting worse? Have you experienced any unwanted side effects from your medication? As a patient, you can book a medicine review with your healthcare professional at any time to ensure you are on the right medication for you.

**For further information on any of the campaigns please contact [victoriacasey@nhs.net](mailto:victoriacasey@nhs.net)**